

NATIONAL FOREIGN TRADE COUNCIL, INC.

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April 4, 2005

Dear Representative/Senator:

On behalf of the 300 members of the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC), employing millions of American workers, I am writing to urge your support for the U.S.-Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA). We firmly believe that implementation of this agreement is in the clear national economic interest of the United States.

There are many important reasons to support the DR-CAFTA. I would like to emphasize two reasons of particular importance to the NFTC. First, it is a high-standard and commercially significant agreement which will establish reciprocal opportunities for economic growth and strengthened relations. By eliminating trade barriers and advancing transparent and improved trade rules, the DR-CAFTA will expand US trade with our Central American and Dominican Republic neighbors. This trade already accounts for a growing share of US trade, with the region as the 12th largest trading partner of the United States, our second largest market in Latin America, and our sixth fastest growing market over the past five years. The fact is our market is already open to Central America and the Dominican Republic because of our longstanding unilateral trade preference programs and our generally much lower levels of trade barriers; the DR-CAFTA will transform this one-way free trade relationship into a fully reciprocal two-way free trade partnership.

Second, approval of the DR-CAFTA is vital to our broader trade and foreign policy agenda, especially as it relates to our leadership and trade negotiating objectives in the WTO Doha Development Agenda and other FTA negotiations underway with countries in the Middle East and elsewhere. Not only does the United States have an enormous stake in a successful outcome to the Doha Agenda, we are at a critical juncture in the negotiations with the upcoming Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in December. Implementation of the DR-CAFTA will set a positive example for other developing countries on the importance of trade liberalization to broader economic development. It will also bolster US leadership and credibility in achieving a high level of ambitious multilateral market opening as the chief outcome of the Doha Round. We believe failure to approve the DR-CAFTA agreement will have the opposite effect and will undermine our effectiveness in the WTO in opening critically important developing country markets such as Brazil, India, China and many others.

For these reasons and many more, we urge your approval of the DR-CAFTA.

Sincerely,



William A. Reinsch
President